

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of heat-treatment of a package, comprising ~~the steps of:~~
 - placing a number of packages in a retort,
 - pressurising the retort to a first pressure by the supply of a gaseous pressurisation medium with low moisture content, such as air or the like,
 - supplying a heating medium for heating the package and the product packed in the package,
 - raising, in connection with the supply of the heating medium, the pressure in the retort to a second pressure, and
 - reducing, during the final phase of the heat-treatment, the pressure in the retort in such a manner that the pressure in the packaging material and the pressure within of the product packed in the package is higher than or equal to the pressure prevailing in the retort outside the package.
2. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said first pressure is at least approximately 1 bar, ~~preferably approximately 2 bar, or more preferably 3 bar.~~

3. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said first pressure is approximately the same as said second pressure.

4. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding Claims~~ Claim 1, wherein said second pressure is of the order of magnitude of 3 to 6 bar, ~~preferably approximately 4 to 5 bar.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding Claims~~ Claim 1, wherein said heating medium is steam.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 5, further comprising ~~the step of~~ supplying water via a number of nozzles to the outside of the packages.

7. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding Claims~~ Claim 1, comprising ~~the step of~~ selecting, as package, a package of a paper-based packaging laminate.

8. (New) The method as claimed Claim 2, wherein said second pressure is of the order of magnitude of 3 to 6 bar.

9. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said second pressure is of the order of magnitude of 3 to 6 bar.

10. (New) The method as claimed Claim 4, wherein said second pressure is of the order of magnitude of 3 to 6 bar.

11. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein said heating medium is steam.

12. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said heating medium is steam.

13. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 4, wherein said heating medium is steam.

14. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 5, wherein said heating medium is steam.

15. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 2, comprising selecting, as package, a package of a paper-based packaging laminate.

16. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 3, comprising selecting, as package, a package of a paper-based packaging laminate.

17. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 7, comprising the step of selecting, as package, a package of a paper-based packaging laminate.

18 (New) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said first pressure is approximately 2 bar.

19. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said first pressure is approximately 3 bar

20. (New) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second pressure is of the order of magnitude of approximately 4 to 5 bar.